ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An e-commerce web site has an application tier and a web tier, each with multiple servers. The application tier runs the resource-intensive functions germane to the site's purpose; while the web tier provides the primary interface for clients. The web tier implements admission control so that some requests can be deferred during periods of heavy traffic. In addition, the web tier can request additional web-tier and application-tier resources when they can be added cost effectively. The application tier monitors its own resource utilization and communicates resource-utilization data to the web tier. The web tier uses this application-tier resource-utilization data to determine its deferral criteria. In addition, the web-tier can monitor its own resource utilization and take the results into account in determining the deferral criteria. By monitoring application-tier utilization at the application tier rather than remotely at the web tier, more accurate and more flexible information is obtained, allowing for a better-optimized deferral scheme.